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AN ANTHOLOGY

DREADLANDS™ HELLRAISER™ STALKERS™ WILD CARDS™



#1 IN A FOUR-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES

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LEWIS SHINER

WALTER JON WILLIAMS

SCRIPT

MIKE COLLINS

KEV HOPGOOD

ART

DAVE MCKEAN

COVER

CLIVE BARKER'S HELLRAISER

EVERYBODY HARBORS SOME SECRET DESIRE, AMBITION OR WISH, AND THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO FULFILL THEM; HARD WORK, IF YOU'RE SO INCLINED, THE WILL TO SUCCEED, MONEY IF YOU HAVE IT, POWER OF THE FIST OR THE DOLLAR. . . BUT THERE ARE THOSE WHO WILL DO ANYTHING, SACRIFICE THEIR VERY LIVES, GIVE UP THEIR IMMORTAL SOULS, TO GET WHAT THEY WANT.

ENTER THE CENOBITES, THE LORDS OF ORDER, HIGH PRIESTS OF PAIN AND TORTURE FOR WHOM DISFIGUREMENT, DISMEMBERMENT, BODY PIERCING ARE HOLY INSTITUTES, RITUAL PRACTICES TO BE REVERED AND WORSHIPPED. THEY ARE THE STORMTROOPERS, THE AGENTS, THE MINIONS OF LEVIATHAN, THE VERY EMPEROR OF HELL ITSELF, THEIR MISSION IS TO ENSNARE THE GREEDY, THE GLUTTONOUS AND THE DEPRAVED.

THEIR METHOD IS THE LAMENT CONFIGURATION, AN INTRICATE PUZZLE OF GEOMETRIC SHAPES AND PATTERNS AND LINES THAT EXISTS IN A VAST ARRAY OF FORMS — FROM A SMALL METAL BOX TO THE ARCHITECTURE WITHIN A TOWER BLOCK. ONLY THE MOST DESPERATE AND SICK MINDS CAN UNLOCK ITS COMPLEX AND CONVOLUTED TRACERIES AND WHEN THE RIDDLE IS FINALLY SOLVED, THE CONFIGURATION OPENS A HIGHWAY TO THE BLACK HEART OF HELL AND SUMMONS FORTH THE CENOBITES. NOW THE BARGAIN HAS BEEN STRUCK. IN PAYMENT FOR FULFILLING YOUR EVERY FANTASY, THEY WILL TAKE YOUR SOUL AND RIP IT APART IN A BLIZZARD OF HOOKS AND CHAINS AND BLOOD. . .





...THE INCIDENT LEAVING THE THEN PREGNANT MRS. HILLARD IN A COMATOSE STATE.

DOCTORS HAVE STRESSED THAT THE CONTINUING PREGNANCY HAS PUT MRS. HILLARD'S OWN PHYSICAL HEALTH IN SEVERE JEOPARDY...



...A FACT THAT HAS NOT STOPPED ANTI-ABORTION ACTIVISTS FROM GAINING AN INJUNCTION AGAINST HUSBAND STEVEN HILLARD TAKING ANY ACTION AGAINST THE FETUS.



CYNTHIA HILLARD'S DOCTORS EXPRESS LITTLE HOPE FOR THE COMA PATIENT LIVING THROUGH THE PREGNANCY, AND FEEL CERTAIN HER DECLINING HEALTH WILL HAVE SERIOUS...



...PERHAPS FATAL--REFER-
OSSIONS FOR THE FETUS--



THOUGHT YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO BE THE BEST LAWYER IN TOWN, MITCH OLD BUDDY.

THEY'VE BROUGHT OUT SOME PRETTY BIG GUNS OF THEIR OWN, STEVE. I'M SORRY, IT WASN'T--

WE DON'T HAVE TO STOP FIGHTING, THOUGH. WE CAN--

YOU CAN, MAYBE. NOT ME. LOOK AT ME, MITCH-- I DON'T SLEEP, I'M OUT OF SHAPE, THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO ABOUT IT.



THIS IS KILLING ME, MITCH, AND IF I LET THAT HAPPEN, THEN I'VE DONE BOTH ME AND CYNTHIA IN.

WHY KEEP FOOLING OURSELVES? THIS DIDN'T START HERE... IT'S NOT GOING TO END HERE. YOU KNOW WHAT HAS TO BE DONE.



I DON'T KNOW ANYMORE. WHEN IT WAS JUST TALK, THAT WAS ONE THING. BUT WHEN I STARTED TO FIND OUT...

YOU CAN TELL THEM-- WHAT REALLY HAPPENED. THEN MAYBE--

THEN THEY LOOK ME UP FOR LOGS OF INSANE AND CYNTHIA DIES FOR SURE. NO "MAYBE" ABOUT IT.

"AND EVEN IF THEY DID LISTEN,
DO YOU THINK THEY'D CARE?"

"A COUPLE OF YIDDIES HAVE 'MARITAL
PROBLEMS' SO THEY GO FOR EVERYTHING
FROM JEEB POWLEN TO AN ACUPUNCTURE
TRYING FOR HIM TO GET IT UP."

"IT'S AN OBSESSION...
JUST LIKE EACH
OTHER."



"THEY FINALLY FIND
SOMETHING THAT
DOES THE TRICK.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO
BE SOME NEW AGE
VIBRATOR--
EXCEPT MY GUESS
GOES MORE TOWARD
OLDER THAN TIME..."

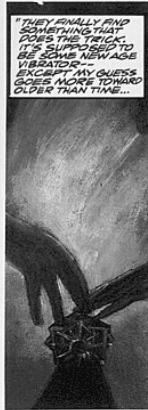
"IT SOLVES THE
PROBLEM, ALRIGHT..."

"...THE PROBLEM IS,
THAT'S NOT ALL IT
SOLVES."

WHAT IS...
YOUR
PLEASURE?

STEVEN!
STEVEN
WHAT--

CYN!
CYN
GET--





AH...
EACH OTHER.
HOW...
ROMANTIC.

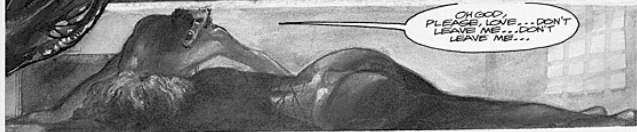
LET FRIGG...
BE YOUR CUPID. TAKE
ME... AS YOUR
EROS.



LET FRIGG...
SHOW YOU... WHAT
IT IS LIKE TO TRULY
SHARE IN EACH
OTHER.

LET US
ALL... SHARE
IN EACH OTHER...

CYN...



OH GOD,
PLEASE, LOVE... DON'T
LEAVE ME... DON'T
LEAVE ME...



"STEVEN, YOU DON'T
HAVE TO DO THIS--"

"YES I DO, MITCH-- YES
I DO. OTHERWISE I
START BELIEVING THAT
LINE OF BULLSHIT I FEEL
THEM ABOUT A CRAZY
BREAKING IN, AND
ATTACKING US.

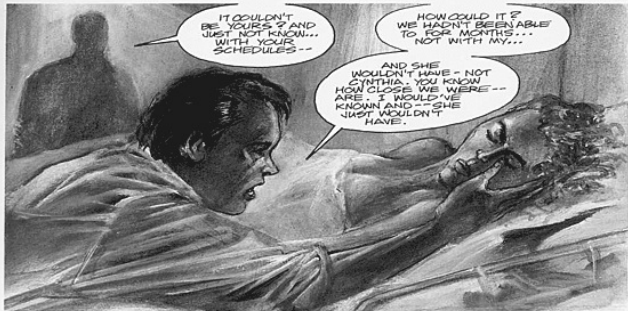
PLEASE...
HELP HER...
PLEASE...



WE STILL
HAVE SOME TESTS
TO RUN, MR.
HILLARD...

BUT WE
BELIEVE AT THIS
TIME THE BABY WILL
BE FINE. WHAT IS
YOUR WIFE--ABOUT
A MONTH?

BABY...



IT COULDN'T
BE YOURS? AND
JUST NOT KNOW...
WITH YOUR
SCHEDULES--

HOW COULD IT?
WE HADN'T BEEN ABLE
TO FOR MONTHS...
NOT WITH MY...

AND SHE
WOULDN'T HAVE - NOT
CYNTHIA. YOU KNOW
HOW CLOSE WE WERE--
ARE. I WOULD'VE
KNOWN AND-- SHE
JUST WOULDN'T
HAVE.



THEN
WE SEE IF
I DID MY
HOMEWORK
RIGHT.



IT'S
CALLED
ALL SORTS OF
THINGS-- ABOUT
THE ONLY ONE
GOOD FOR MIXED
COMPANY IS A
"LAWYER
CONFIGURATION."

IT'S A--A
KEY, IN A WAY, YOU
WANT TO BAD ENOUGH,
YOU CAN TURN IT...
AND THEY COME.
WHATEVER
"THEY" ARE.



THIS THING OF
YOURS, LIKE ANY--
GOD, THIS SOUNDS INSANE
-- "SUPERNATURAL
BEING". THEY'VE
GOT LAWS JUST
LIKE OURS.

BUT UNLIKE
US, THEY DON'T
PLAY FAST AND LOOSE
-- TO THEM, WHAT'S
ON THE BOOKS IS
WHAT THEY GO BY.
THAT'S GOOD
AND BAD...

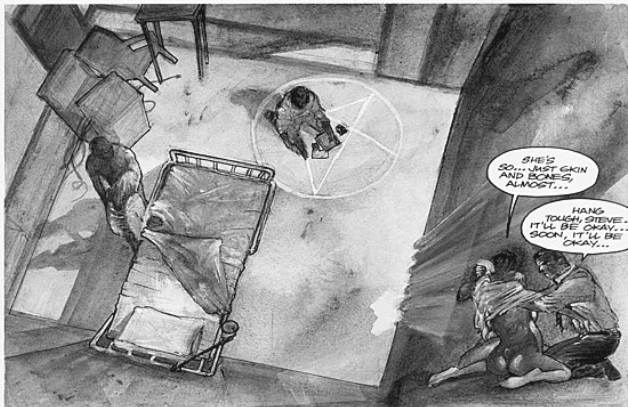
THAT MEANS WE
CAN GET IT TO DO WHAT
WE WANT, BUT YOU'RE
GOING TO HAVE TO BE
VERY SPECIFIC
ABOUT WHAT
YOU WANT,
OKAY?

UNDERSTAND
WHAT I'M--



WHATEVER YOU
SAY, MITCH, HOWEVER
YOU SAY, BUT
LET'S JUST
DO IT!

EVERY
MINUTE SHE SLIPS
FURTHER AWAY...
AND WHATEVER IT
PUT INSIDE HER
GETS CLOSER...





FEEL IT,
MITCH? MAKE
SURE SHE
DOES...

SOMETHING'S...
IT'S STARTING
TO--

THERE!
SEE--

THERE IS...
NO PLEASURE
HERE.

THERE
IS... DISSENT...
DISORDER...

I DON'T
BELIEVE ON
STEVE I
DIDN'T--

...UNBALANCE.

KRAAK

WHERE'S YOUR
GODDAM HARD-ON
NOW, YOU SICK
PIECE OF SHIT?!



"LET ME BE YOUR
EROS, YOUR CUPID!" LET
ME TELL YOU WHAT YOU'RE
GOING TO BE --

YOU'RE GOING
TO BE TAKING OUT OF
HER WHATEVER THE HELL
YOU PUT THERE! YOU'RE
GONNA PUT HER BACK
THE WAY YOU FOUND
HER!

SO CAREFULLY...
STRUCTURED...
THE CIRCLE.

AND YET... SO
LITTLE APPRECIATION
OF THE GREATER
ORDER.

YOU SOUGHT...
UNION. DID WE NOT
...ALL SHARE
...EQUALLY?

ALL...?
STEVEN, ASK IT
WHAT IT --?

STEVE, BE
CAREFUL -- YOU
DON'T KNOW EVERY
THING IT --

IT'S UNDER
CONTROL. MITCH, I'VE
GOT IT UNDER
CONTROL!

NOW
DO IT -- MAKE
HER RIGHT!

YOUR KIND...
FOREVER SEEKING
ORDER, THEN...
CLINGING TO CHAOS
WHEN WE BRING
WHAT YOU ASK.

YOU HAVE...
YOUR REQUEST...
AND NOTHING
MORE. SUCH
IS THE PRICE
OF
ABERRATION.



LIVE WITH...
YOUR CHAOS, STEVEN
HILLARD. AND WHEN
...YOU LEARN THE
ERROR OF YOUR
WAYS... WE
SHALL BE
WAITING.



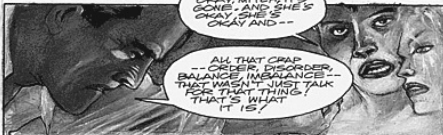
STEVEY...
STEVEY, WHAT...

CYNTHIA?
GYN! OH, GOD,
SWEET LOVE, I'VE
MISSED YOU,
I'VE MISSED
YOU...



DAMN YOU, STEVE,
DAMN YOU! WHY DIDN'T
YOU LISTEN TO ME?
WHY DIDN'T YOU LISTEN
TO IT?!

I TOLD
YOU-- THEY HAD
LAWS AND RULES
AND YOU WERE
SUPPOSED TO
LISTEN!



SHH. IT'S
OKAY, MITCH, IT'S
GONE. AND SHE'S
OKAY. SHE'S
OKAY AND--

ALL THAT CRAP
--ORDER, DISORDER,
BALANCE, IMBALANCE--
THAT WASN'T JUST TALK
FOR THAT THING!
THAT'S WHAT
IT IS!



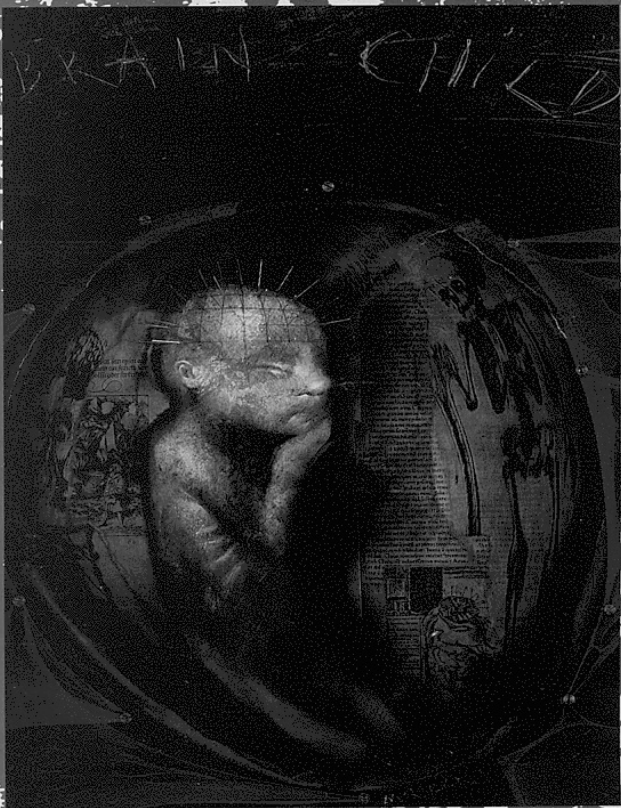
YOU TOLD IT, TAKE
CARE OF CYNTHIA, LIKE SHE
WAS THE ONLY ONE THERE
THAT NIGHT-- BUT THIS
THING DOESN'T DO THINGS
HALF-ASSED! IT DOESN'T
DO THINGS IN HALFS AT
ALL-- THAT WOULD
BE UNEQUAL,
CHAOTIC.

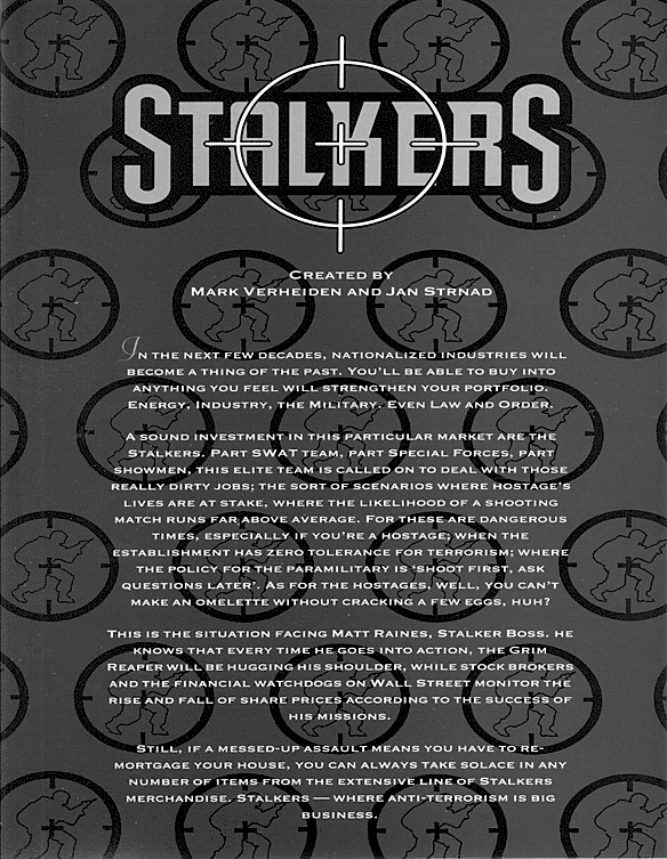
MITCH,
FOR GOD'S SAKE,
WHAT ARE YOU--



DON'T YOU SEE
WHAT IT DID? IT RAPED
YOU BOTH, STEVEN.

AND ANY DAY
NOW YOU SHOULD
FEEL THE FIRST
KICK.





STALKERS

CREATED BY
MARK VERHEIDEN AND JAN STRNAD

*I*N THE NEXT FEW DECADES, NATIONALIZED INDUSTRIES WILL BECOME A THING OF THE PAST. YOU'LL BE ABLE TO BUY INTO ANYTHING YOU FEEL WILL STRENGTHEN YOUR PORTFOLIO. ENERGY, INDUSTRY, THE MILITARY. EVEN LAW AND ORDER.

A SOUND INVESTMENT IN THIS PARTICULAR MARKET ARE THE STALKERS. PART SWAT TEAM, PART SPECIAL FORCES, PART SHOWMEN, THIS ELITE TEAM IS CALLED ON TO DEAL WITH THOSE REALLY DIRTY JOBS; THE SORT OF SCENARIOS WHERE HOSTAGE'S LIVES ARE AT STAKE, WHERE THE LIKELIHOOD OF A SHOOTING MATCH RUNS FAR ABOVE AVERAGE. FOR THESE ARE DANGEROUS TIMES, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE A HOSTAGE; WHEN THE ESTABLISHMENT HAS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR TERRORISM; WHERE THE POLICY FOR THE PARAMILITARY IS 'SHOOT FIRST, ASK QUESTIONS LATER'. AS FOR THE HOSTAGES, WELL, YOU CAN'T MAKE AN OMELETTE WITHOUT CRACKING A FEW EGGS, HUH?

THIS IS THE SITUATION FACING MATT RAINES, STALKER BOSS. HE KNOWS THAT EVERY TIME HE GOES INTO ACTION, THE GRIM REAPER WILL BE HUGGING HIS SHOULDER, WHILE STOCK BROKERS AND THE FINANCIAL WATCHDOGS ON WALL STREET MONITOR THE RISE AND FALL OF SHARE PRICES ACCORDING TO THE SUCCESS OF HIS MISSIONS.

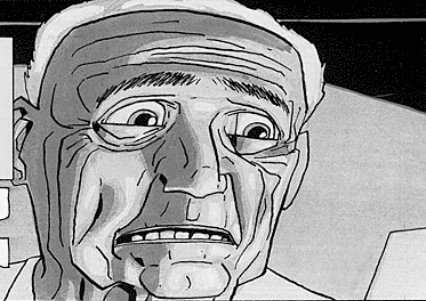
STILL, IF A MESSED-UP ASSAULT MEANS YOU HAVE TO RE-MORTGAGE YOUR HOUSE, YOU CAN ALWAYS TAKE SOLACE IN ANY NUMBER OF ITEMS FROM THE EXTENSIVE LINE OF STALKERS MERCHANDISE. STALKERS — WHERE ANTI-TERRORISM IS BIG BUSINESS.

Chapter One

THE DEBT

Son - I am writing this because I want you to understand why I've done this terrible thing.

It wasn't out of anger, but shame. Sadness. Love.



I grew up in the '30's during the Great Depression. I was just a child then - I never understood the cold economics of the crash.



I only knew that the world had changed. My father lost everything.

I remember the despair in his eyes, the pain that came with the wondering - would we have food that day? Would we be able to keep our home?



I met your mother at the Suffolk Ballroom on April 12, 1932. She had come with her parents - I can still remember the look on their faces when I asked Elizabeth to dance.



She was so beautiful.

I knew from the moment I saw her that one day she'd be my wife.



I loved her more than anything.

I started with the Capitol Motor Bar Company on August 23, 1946. Those were the days when a man felt a sense of loyalty and allegiance to his company.



Work hard and they would take care of you.

We bought the house and raised you the best we could. We weren't rich, but you never went without. That was important. It meant something.



You'll be amazed how fast time passes by. One day, you're a young man, with your entire life ahead of you.



The next day you're old,
looking forward to simpler pleasures

We always saved. We wanted something for our retirement - a little extra to ease the burden of our closing years.



Capitol laid me off two years before I made pension - 'cost cutting' they said. Loyalty - allegiance - it meant nothing.

The man at the bank suggested we put our savings into a special, high yield "investment" account. We assumed it was just like our regular savings account.



Maybe it was my fault, Matthew. Lord knows I never understood the legal terms - insured, uninsured -



All I know is they stole everything we had. Years of scrimping and saving vanished with the scratch of a rich man's pen.



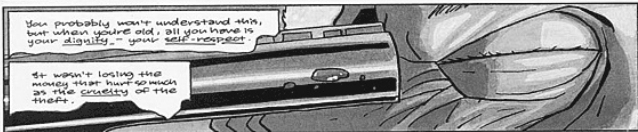
They managed to put my father's pain into my eyes.

How could I tell Elizabeth we had nothing? How could I tell anyone?



You probably won't understand this, but when you're old, all you have is your dignity - your self-respect.

It wasn't losing the money that hurt so much as the cruelty of the theft.



Don't despair, son, and don't hate me for what I've done. It was for the best.

I know we've had our problems, but your mother and I love you - we'll always love you -



NO!

OH GOD -

WHY, DAD - WHY?



I HADN'T SLEPT MUCH SINCE IT HAPPENED. THEY DIDN'T FIND THE BODIES FOR SIX DAYS, AND IN THE ARIZONA HEAT—

THE POLICE AND NEWSPAPERS CALLED IT A MURDER/ SUICIDE. A LOCAL TABLOID SHOW PHONED ABOUT DOING A SEGMENT ON THEIR DEATHS.



I TOLD THE PRODUCER THAT IF SHE CAME ANYWHERE NEAR ME, I'D KILL HER.

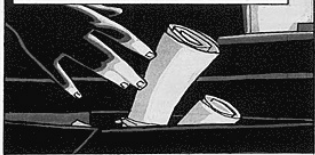
REALLY WASN'T MUCH TO DO WHEN ALL WAS SAID AND DONE. THERE WAS THE FUNERAL, SOME LEGAL BUSINESS WITH THE ESTATE—THEN IT WAS OVER.

THE WORLD CLOSED ITS BOOKS ON CONRAD AND ELIZABETH RAINES.



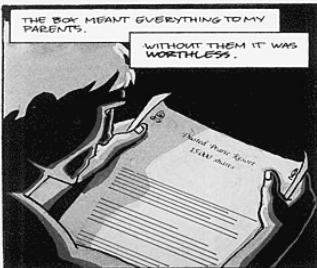
THE BANK SENT OVER THE CONTENTS OF THEIR SAFETY DEPOSIT BOX NOT LONG AFTER IT HAPPENED. FUNNY THE THINGS PEOPLE TREASURE IN LIFE.

A LOCK OF BABY'S HAIR, CLIPPINGS ABOUT LONG FORGOTTEN WEDDINGS AND SPORTING EVENTS, SOMEONE'S WORN "LUCKY QUARTER."

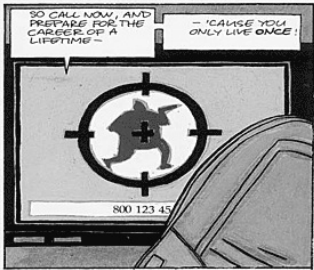


THE BOY MEANT EVERYTHING TO MY PARENTS.

WITHOUT THEM IT WAS WORTHLESS.



WORTHLESS.



PHOENIX, ARIZONA. 1999.

"YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE." I WONDER WHAT SICK MADISON AVENUE GEMUS CAME UP WITH THAT ONE.

KLIK!

CAN'T BELIEVE I USED TO SWALLOW THAT CRAP.

THE MAIN OFFICE INTENTIONALLY PLACES OUR RECRUITING ADS IN THE EARLY AFTERNOON, THAT WAY WE BANG ON OUR TARGET AUDIENCE -

UNDEREDUCATED, UNDEREMPLOYED, DISFRANCHISED CANNON FODDER WITH A FONDNESS FOR SOAP OPERAS AND ANCIENT SITCOMS.

HELL - THAT'S HOW THEY FOUND ME.

MATT?

LOOK, I'M SORRY TO BOTHER YOU, BUT THE NEW HIRES ARE WAITING DOWNSTAIRS. I LEFT THEM IN THE A.V. SUITE WITH TIEENAN'S "WELCOME MAT" VIDEO, BUT -

STILL THINKING ABOUT YOUR PARENTS?

NO - I JUST -

LOOK, FORGET THE TOUR. I'LL GET LIVERMORE OR COLLINS TO -

LIVERMORE WOULD PROBABLY GET LOST - AND IF COLLINS STARTS SHOWING OFF HIS WAR WOUNDS, WE'LL LOSE HALF THESE KIDS TO THE TUCSON OFFICE -

YES, ALL THE THINGS I SHOULD HAVE SAID, I WISH I'D SAID -

CHRIST, ALL I WOULD HAVE GIVEN MY OLD MAN THE MONEY. HE DIDN'T EVEN ASK -

- IT'S MY FRANCHISE. I'LL DO IT.

STALKERS INC! THE FRONT LINE IN THE WAR AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM.



CARTER TIERMAN, CEO, STALKERS INC.

WE'RE NOT THE MILITARY AND WE'RE NOT THE POLICE - NO, YOU'VE JOINED A SPECIAL, FRANCHISED FORCE THAT OPERATES ON ONE SIMPLE PRINCIPLE -

- MOVE FAST, KICK ASS AND TAKE 'EM OUT.



SOUNDS LIKE MY LAST DATE.

KEEP TALKING AND IT'LL BE YOUR VERY LAST.

BELIEVE ME, YOU'LL MAKE SOME CLOSE FRIENDS IN STALKERS -



I DON'T KNOW - I WAS PRETTY DAMN MEAN IN THE THIRD GRADE -

-AND AS FAR AS SCARY'S CONCERNED WHY DON'T YOU SNIFF ON THIS A WHILE -

WHOA, WHOA, WHOA -

YOU'VE JOINED A ROUGH AND TUMBLE TEAM WITH THE BEST SUCCESS RECORD IN THE WORLD. WHEN THE STALKERS GO IN, WE MEAN BUSINESS.



IN OTHER WORDS, WE KILL EVERYTHING IN SIGHT.

IF CREATIVE EUPHEMISM WERE HIGH ART, TIERMAN WOULD MAKE PICASSO LOOK LIKE A HOUSE PAINTER.

WHEN YOU'RE IN THE FIELD, YOU COUNT ON YOUR GUN AND YOUR BUDDY. IT'S THAT CAMARADERIE UNDER FIRE THAT GIVES US THE EDGE.



YEAH? 'SCUSE ME IF I DON'T FAINT, BUT YOU'RE ABOUT AS SCARY AS A THIRD GRADER WITH A PEA-SHOOT -

FRIENDS YOU'LL KEEP THE REST OF YOUR LIFE!



IF YOU'RE GOING TO KILL EACH OTHER, DO IT ON YOUR OWN TIME -

YOU'RE ON OUR CLOCK NOW AND YOU'LL DIE WHEN YOU'RE TOLD.

THE DUSTED PRARIE HOTEL,
SCOTTSDALE ARIZONA.

I CAN'T BELIEVE
LENCOV'S GALL!

I MEAN, LOOK AT THIS PLACE. IT
MAKES THE T&J MAHAL LOOK
LIKE A SHARECROPPERS SHACK!

GOOD ANALOGY - ESPECIALLY SINCE
THE TAXPAYERS ARE GOING TO
END UP PAYING FOR THE DAMN
THING -

EXCUSE ME, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN - AS YOU KNOW,
TODAY'S DEDICATION CEREMONIES ARE A PRIVATE
AFFAIR. BUT MR. LENCOV HAS BEEN KIND ENOUGH
TO MAKE PROVISIONS FOR CERTAIN MEMBERS OF
THE PRESS.

IF THE REPORTERS FROM
"PEOPLE" "US" AND "ARIZONA
HIGHWAYS" WOULD PLEASE
FOLLOW ME -

WHAT?!!

WHAT ABOUT THE REST OF US?

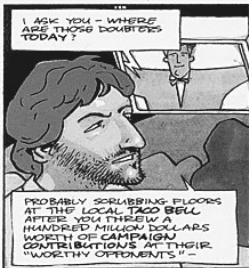
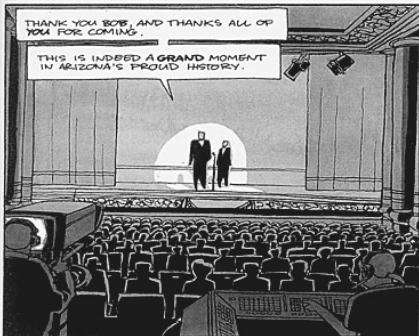
MR. LENCOV FEELS HIS TREATMENT FROM THE OTHER
JOURNAUS HAS BEEN CHEAP, TAWDRY AND BIASED -

YOU'RE CALLING THE
NEW YORK TIMES
THE WALL STREET
JOURNAL AND THE
CHRISTIAN SCIENCE
MONITOR TAWDRY?

WHAT'S LENCOV READ?
BOY'S LIFE?

I'M SO SORRY - THANK YOU FOR
REMINDING ME!

WE'LL PASS OUT A PRESS
RELEASE AND SOME ORANGEADE
ONCE THE CEREMONY HAS
CONCLUDED - OTHERWISE, FEEL
FREE TO WATCH. WE'RE GOING
OUT LIVE OVER KWOC.









DREADLAND

CREATED BY
STEVE WHITE AND ANDY LANNING

THE NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE. THE WORLD IS IN ECOLOGICAL RUIN. MANKIND'S ONCE-PROUD CIVILIZATION LIES IN TATTERS. WAR, STRIFE, MASS STERILITY AND HUNGER HAVE CONSPIRED TO BRING THE HUMAN RACE TO ITS KNEES. YET, AMID THE CHAOS, THERE COULD BE HOPE.

DEEP UNDERGROUND, A GROUP OF SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS AND SOLDIERS STRUGGLE TO DEVELOP CROPS AND LIVESTOCK CAPABLE OF SURVIVING THE NIGHTMARE WORLD ABOVE. THEY ARE ALSO WORKING ON REFINING THE NEAR- LIMITLESS SUPPLY OF ENERGY PROVIDED BY BALL LIGHTNING. A RATHER INTERESTING SIDE-EFFECT OF THIS RESEARCH HAS BEEN THE DISCOVERY OF A POSSIBLE METHOD OF TIME TRAVEL. HOWEVER, BEFORE THIS CAN BE EFFECTIVELY TESTED, THE BASE IS ATTACKED BY A HORDE OF SCAVENGERS AND RENEGADES. FACED WITH BEING OVERRUN, CAPTURED AND TORTURED, A HANDFUL OF SURVIVING SCIENTISTS AND THEIR PROTECTORS DECIDE TO RISK USING THE UNTRIED TIME MACHINE AND 'JUMP' SIX MONTHS INTO THE FUTURE. HOWEVER, LIGHTNING DESTROYS THE MACHINE'S SYSTEMS AND THE CADRE IS HURLED 150 MILLION YEARS INTO THE PAST.

THEY NOW FIND THEMSELVES TRAPPED IN A WORLD WHERE THEY MUST FIGHT FOR SURVIVAL IN A TIME WHEN THE DYNASTY OF THE DINOSAURS WAS AT THE HEIGHT OF ITS POWER. SOON, THEY ARE NOT ONLY FIGHTING DINOSAURS, HUGE CROCODILES AND A CRIPPLING DROUGHT, BUT THEMSELVES AS THE THIN VENEER OF CIVILIZATION IS STRIPPED AWAY.

HOWEVER, THE REAL STRUGGLE BEGINS WHEN ONE DAY, THE SUNRISE CASTS ITS LIGHT ON THE CRYSTALLINE FLANKS OF AN AWESOME SPACESHIP. THE VESSEL BELONGS TO A RACE OF GALAXY-TROTTERING ALIENS CALLED THE MENHYRR...



NORTH AMERICA, 65
MILLION YEARS AGO...

THE TRUMPET VOLLEYS OF NADROSURS AND
THE GRUFF SNOOTINGS OF THE TRICERATOPS
BLEND WITH THE MYSTIC HUM AND WHIRL
OF THE SERVANT DROIDS AS THEY GATHER
THE FINAL HARVEST.

THERE IS A SENSE OF URGENCY IN
THEIR TOILING. TIME IS SHORT.

THE FIRSTLINGS ARE SKITTISH...

...PERHAPS FEARING EACH OTHER,
PERHAPS FEARING THE COMING STORM.

BUT THESE SEEDLINGS, GATHERED FROM THE MYRIAD
CROP, WILL BE SAFE, ALLOWED TO PROPAGATE
ELSEWHERE IN THE CELESTIAL GARDEN.

FROM HIS VANTAGE POINT THE MENHYRR
LOOKS ON, HIS HEART FULL OF MELANCHOLY...

...KNOWING THAT HIS TIME
HERE IS NEARLY DONE.

HIS FAVOURITE SNIFF THE
AIR AND TREMBLE...



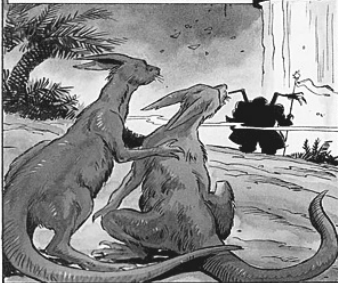
...AS THE CHILL WIND PICKS UP AND
THE GROUND BEGINS TO SHUDDER.

HE MUST LEAVE THEM NOW.



THE TIME HAS COME.

THOSE LEFT BEHIND MUST FACE
THEIR DESTINY UNAIDED; THAT IS
THE WAY OF THE MENHYR.



SOMETIMES IT IS NOT AN EASY WAY...

THE HUGE LOADING PLATFORM
GLIDES SMOOTHLY INTO THE
BELLY OF THE SHIP CARRYING
THE MAMMALS AND THEIR
PROTECTOR TO SAFETY.

THE MENMYRR KNOWS
THAT, IN THE SHORELESS
OCEANS OF TIME, TWO
SMALL DROPS WILL
BARELY CAST A RIFLE.



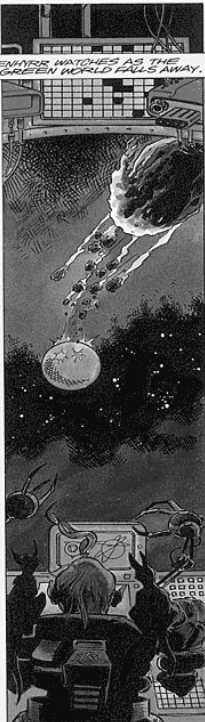
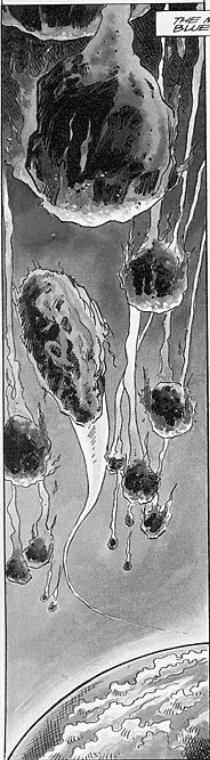
JUST AS HE KNOWS
THAT HE COULD NOT
BEAR TO LEAVE
THEM BEHIND AT
THE MERCY OF
THE CATASTROPHIC
WINTER THAT
APPROACHES.



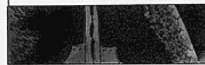
INSIDE THEIR NURSERIES,
THE FIRSTLINGS ARE AT
EASE, TRANQUIL AMONGST
FAMILIAR SURROUNDINGS...

...UNWARE OF THE BLIGHT
THAT DESCENDS TO RAZE
THEIR LAND.

THE MENHYRR WATCHES AS THE
BLUE-GREEN WORLD FALLS AWAY.



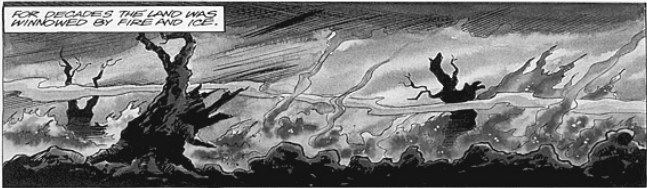
HE WILL PASS THIS WAY AGAIN SOMEDAY...



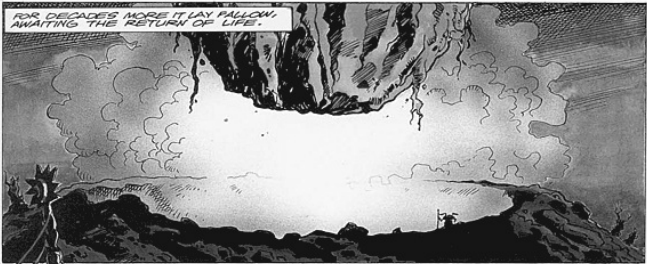
...BUT THINGS WILL
NOT BE THE SAME.



FOR DECADES THE LAND WAS
WINNOWN BY FIRE AND ICE.



FOR DECADES MORE IT LAY FALLOW,
AWAITING THE RETURN OF LIFE.



NOW THE CYCLE IS COMPLETE.



THE MENHYRR TREADS HIS
OLD PASTURES, NOW LITTLE
MORE THAN A WASTELAND.



YET, NEW LIFE IS EMERGING
FROM THE ASHES.



FROM AMONGST THE BONES OF THE OLD
GIANTS, A NEW ORDER IS RISING.



SPRING HAS COME TO
THE LAND ONCE MORE.



THE GARDEN IS IN FULL
BLOOM AND HE HAS
TWO MORE SEEDS TO
SOW...



WILD CARDS

*T*HE ALIEN WILD CARD VIRUS HAS LEFT A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF NEW YORK'S INHABITANTS AS SUPER-POWERED ACES OR DEFORMED JOKERS. DR. TACHYON, ONE OF THE RACE THAT CREATED THE VIRUS, ATTEMPTS ATONEMENT FROM HIS JOKERTOWN CLINIC.

CHAPTER ONE MASKS OF THE RED DEATH

Dr. Tachyons Secret Journal

November 7, 1985

It was only a few months ago that I discovered the monster inside Senator Gregg Hartmann, failed Presidential Candidate and, alleged friend to the victims of the Wild Card.



It is a monster that regards human beings as no more than puppets, that thrives on their pain.



I know now that this monster caused the Jokedown Riot of 1976. But what other violence and mayhem might be laid at his feet?

I've been thinking tonight
of two years ago, when
the Oriental Drug Lord Kien
and his Shadow Fist Society
battled the Mafia for control
of New York's underworld
-- and won.

It was one of the
bloodiest chapters
in the City's
history and yet...
I've never under-
stood how it all
began.



Hartmann's behavior at the time seemed unusual.
And what of the ace called Black Shadow, who disap-
peared after his part in the Tokartown Riot, 10 years
ago? Rumors link him to Hartmann, and claim
him to be a master of disguise...

Vote
HARTMANN
FOR THE
SENATE

November 21, 1986. Senator
GREGG HARTMAN's office,
New York City.



My name is BLACK
SHADOW. I'm a HERO.
I fight CRIME.

...HELP IF
I COULD, BUT I
CAN'T DO ANYTHING
UNLESS YOU GIVE
YOURSELF UP.

ABSOLUTELY
NOT.

I'M MORE
VALUABLE
ON THE
STREET.



BUT
YOU'RE WANTED
FOR MURDER.

AND I'M
GUILTY! I WE
BOTH KNOW
THAT!

THEY MAY
NOT BE ABLE
TO PROVE
THAT.

WHY
TAKE THE
CHANCE?



I'M
WASTING
YOUR TIME,
SENATOR.



I'M LEAVING
SOON ON THAT WORLD
HEALTH ORGANISATION
TOUR.

I WON'T
BE ABLE TO
HELP YOU
WHEN I'M
GONE...



I'VE GOT
PLENTY TO
KEEP ME BUSY
WHILE YOU'RE
GONE. THE
SHADOW FISTS,
FOR ONE.



THE
SHADOW
FISTS?

A NEW
GANG
ALLIANCE
IN
JOKER-
TOWN.

I like GANGS.
So many ways
to AMUSE my-
self with
them...



IT'S TIME
SOMEBODY
PAID THEM
SOME
ATTENTION.

DON'T DO
ANYTHING
HASTY!

I DON'T
WANT YOU TO KILL
ANYONE UNTIL I
GET THERE!





DETECTIVE
KAVAT, LONG
TIMES NO
SEE.

EVENING,
MURPHY, WHAT
HAPPENED?



TWO BROKEN
SKULLS, A CRUSHED
RIB CAGE, ONE GUY
SHOT HIMSELF
WITH HIS OWN
GUN...

...AND
TWO GUYS
FROZEN.



THEY'RE
AT THE CLINIC
GETTING WARM
WATER...

SOUNDS
LIKE THAT
KILLER ACE,
WHAT'S HIS NAME?
BLACK SHADOW.



HE WAS
AFTER **BAD GUYS**
TONIGHT. THERE'S
DRUGS AND WEAPONS
ALL OVER THE PLACE.

LUCKY
HE'S ON OUR
SIDE.



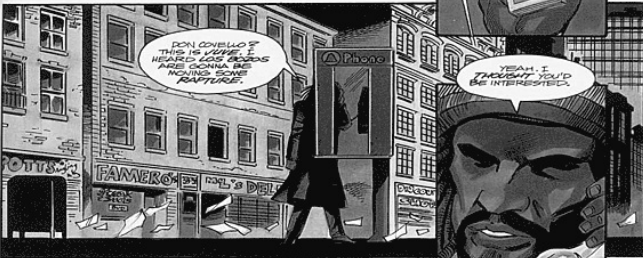
LUCKY?
JUST THINK ABOUT
THE **PAPERWORK**
THIS IS GONNA
TAKE.















WE'RE IN
A THREE-WAY
FIGHT!

K-WHOOM!

KA BOOM!

BLAM!

BLAM!

CH-CH-CH-CH-CH-CH

I GOT
THE BLOOD,
BUCK! BUT
WHERE'S
THE CASH?

Like I said,
I love GANGS.
They're their
own WORST
ENEMIES.



...a long, bloody war. I'll never know to what extent Hartmann is responsible. His political career is over now...

But there are many debts he has to pay. And I don't believe we've seen the last of him.



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LOOK FOR EPIC #2 IN THIRTY DAYS.

BOOK



**CLIVE BARKER'S
HELLRAISER™**

*T*HE LAMENT
CONFIGURATION. AN
INTRICATE PUZZLE OF
GEOMETRIC SHAPES AND
PATTERNS AND LINES.
SOLVE THE PUZZLE AND
YOU SEAL A DEAL WITH
THE CENOBITES. THEY
KNOW WHAT YOU WANT.
YOUR DEEPEST FANTASY.
COULD YOU FACE YOUR
DARKEST FANTASY
REALIZED?

"BIRTH RITE"

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DAN CHICHESTER

ART
WILLIAM SIMPSON

COVER
DAVE MCKEAN

ISBN #0-87135-845-X

